



Article Alert

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International Day of the Girl Child

Global Women's Issues: Women and Education

By Lori S. Ashford

Few investments have as large a payoff as girls' education. Educated women are more likely to ensure health care for their families, educate their children and become income earners.

The right to education for all has been an international goal for decades, but since the 1990s, women's education and empowerment have come into sharp focus. Several landmark conferences, including the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo, and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, placed these issues at the center of development efforts.

The Millennium Development Goals — agreed to by world leaders at the U.N. Millennium Summit in 2000 — call for universal primary education and for closing the gender gap in secondary and higher education. These high-level agreements spawned initiatives around the world to increase girls' school enrollments. Changes since 1990 have been remarkable, considering the barriers that had to be overcome in developing countries.

In many traditional societies, girls are prevented from attaining their full potential because of lower priority placed on educating daughters (who marry and leave the family) and the lower status of girls and women in general. Families may also have concerns about the school fees, girls being taught by male teachers and girls' safety away from home. Governments and communities have begun to break down these barriers, however, because of overwhelming evidence of the benefits of educating girls.

Why educating girls matters

Few investments have as large a payoff as girls' education. Household surveys in developing countries have consistently shown that women with more education have smaller, healthier and better-educated families. The linkages are clear: Educated women are more likely to take care of their health, desire fewer children and educate them well, which, in turn, makes it more likely their children will survive and thrive into adulthood.

Research by the World Bank and other organizations has shown that increasing girls' schooling boosts women's wages and leads to faster economic growth than educating only boys. Moreover, when women earn more money, they are more likely to invest it in their children and households, enhancing family wealth and well-being.

How girls and women have fared since Beijing

Advances in girls' education worldwide have been a success story in development. According to UNESCO, 96 girls were enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys in 2008, up from 84 girls per 100 boys in 1995. The ratio for secondary school is close behind, at 95 girls to 100 boys in 2008. By 2005, nearly two-thirds of countries had closed the gap between girls' and boys' school enrollments. Girls still lag behind boys in university-level education worldwide, but the gap is closing over time.

There is progress, but girls still lag far behind boys in countries where overall school enrollments are low, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa and Western and Southern Asia.

At the other end of the spectrum, in countries with high levels of school enrollment, girls often fare better than boys. In much of Latin America, Europe, East Asia and in the United

States, girls' enrollments in secondary and higher education have surpassed those of their male peers, demonstrating what girls and women can achieve once the barriers to education have been overcome.

Still, women account for two-thirds of the world's illiterate adults, because older women are less likely to have attended school than their younger counterparts. They are also much more likely to be illiterate if they are poor and live in rural areas. Literacy programs and continuing education exist, but the efforts are not systematically reported across countries. In addition, girls and women are disadvantaged when it comes to technical and vocational education, in fields such as science and technology that have long been dominated by men.

What can we learn from successful efforts?

Many gains in women's education can be attributed to special interventions such as the elimination of school fees, scholarships, community schools for girls and the training of women teachers. Political commitment is essential for raising the profile of the issue and increasing girls' access to schooling.

Because the gender gap is wider at higher levels of education, it will not be enough for girls to merely sign up for school; they need to stay in school. Governments, educators and communities must address issues such as gender stereotypes that reinforce women's lower status, poor school quality, and early marriage and childbearing, which often cut short women's education. These steps may ensure that girls reap the greatest benefits from education. Countries that are committed to gender equality will not only see better report cards in education, they'll be healthier and wealthier as well.

Source: IIP Digital Pamphlet at <http://tinyurl.com/8gvuapt>

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION HIGHLIGHTS

ELECTORAL DAN POPULAR VOTE

Lebih dari 100 juta pemilih akan memberikan suara mereka di seantero A.S. pada pemilu 6 November 2012. Tapi hanya 538 pria dan wanita (disebut sebagai *Elector*) yang akan memilih presiden AS berikutnya, dan pemilihan itu akan berlangsung di 50 ibukota negara bagian dan di Washington, D.C., pada 17 Desember.

Sistem pemilihan tidak langsung ini disebut *Electoral College* dan dirancang pada tahun 1787 oleh para perumus Konstitusi A.S untuk merefleksikan alokasi kekuasaan kepada pemerintahan nasional dalam sistem pemerintahan federal yang mewakili tidak hanya rakyat tapi juga negara bagian.

Electoral College mensyaratkan kandidat presiden mempunyai reputasi nasional dan juga daya tarik yang luas di berbagai wilayah. "Salah satu konsekuensi dari *Electoral College* adalah sistem ini menyulitkan partai ketiga, faksi-faksi regional, atau lebih sedikit tokoh-tokoh untuk dapat meraih kursi kepresidenan", kata John C. Fortier, penulis dari *After People Vote*.

Para *elector* yang memberikan suara di *Electoral College* pada bulan Desember hampir selalu memilih dengan cara yang sama seperti yang dilakukan di pemilihan popular bulan November. Kandidat yang menang pada *Electoral College* hampir selalu memenangkan suara mayoritas pada pemilihan popular secara nasional. Tapi karena hampir semua kecuali dua negara bagian yang memberlakukan sistem pemenang-mengambil-semua (*the winner takes all*), kadang-kadang pemenang pada *Electoral College* berbeda dengan pemenang pada pemilihan populer, seperti terjadi pada tahun 2000.

Suatu strategi pemilu mulai mengalir pada *Electoral College*. Kandidat Presiden tidak memberikan perhatian besar pada negara-negara bagian yang menjadi kantong Demokrat atau Republik pada kampanye mereka. Sebaliknya, mereka akan memfokuskan tim dan dana mereka ke negara-negara bagian yang memiliki suara berimbang antara Demokrat dan Republik – Florida dan Ohio adalah contoh yang terkenal – yang mempunyai pengaruh terhadap hasil akhir pemilihan.

Konstitusi

Pada 1787 para perumus Konstitusi A.S. mencapai kesepakatan besar dalam menciptakan Kongres yang memiliki dua dewan yaitu Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR) , yang anggotanya ditentukan berdasarkan populasi dari tiap negara bagian, dan Senat yang anggotanya terdiri dari dua perwakilan dari tiap negara bagian.



Bagian atas peta A.S. dan bagian bawah peta yang mewakili jumlah electoral vote tahun 2012 untuk tiap Negara bagian.

Lalu para perumus itu mencari jalan supaya presiden mempunyai kekuasaan yang memadai dengan status yang cukup tinggi untuk bisa independen terhadap Kongres. Para perumus Konstitusi A.S. percaya pada konsep pemisahan kekuasaan.

Sejalan dengan itu, para perumus tidak memperbolehkan negara bagian untuk memilih presiden secara langsung. Sebagai gantinya, mereka merancang suatu sistem – *Electoral College* – dimana tiap-tiap negara bagian menunjuk *elector*-nya berdasarkan sistem pemilihan yang berlaku di negara bagian tersebut. Pada 1830, semua *elector* dipilih melalui sistem pemilihan populer.

Hal lain yang patut dicatat dalam sistem ini adalah meskipun *elector* dari tiap negara bagian bertemu untuk memberikan suara mereka dalam pemilihan presiden, tapi mereka tidak pernah berkumpul dalam suatu badan nasional tunggal.

Jumlah *elector* dari setiap negara bagian setara dengan jumlah dua senator ditambahkan dengan jumlah representasi mereka di DPR. Adapun jumlah representasi tiap negara bagian di DPR didasarkan pada sensus nasional yang diadakan tiap 10 tahun. Pada 2012, negara bagian California yang padat penduduknya mempunyai 55 *elector* sementara negara bagian Alaska dan Delaware masing-masing hanya diwakilkan oleh 3 *elector*.

Electoral College sekarang ini terdiri dari 538 delegasi, satu untuk setiap 435 anggota DPR dan 100 senator ditambah tiga untuk ibukota nasional, Washington, D.C. Untuk memenangkan kursi kepresidenan, kandidat presiden dan

wakilnya harus memperoleh mayoritas 270 suara *elector*.

Sistem Dua-Partai

Para perumus Konstitusi A.S. saat itu tidak merancang sistem partai politik demikian pula *Electoral College* tidak dirancang untuk memfasilitasi hal tersebut. Namun, sejalan dengan waktu, *Electoral College* justru semakin mengukuhkan sistem dua partai antara Demokrat dan Republik.

Pertama, negara-negara bagian pada saat itu mulai memberlakukan sistem pemenang-mengambil-semua. Pada sistem itu, suatu partai harus cukup kuat untuk memenangkan pemilihan populer pada tingkat negara bagian, bukan hanya sekedar menang dengan persentase yang seadanya.

Kedua, *Electoral College* mewajibkan partai-partai peserta pemilu untuk menang di negara-negara bagian dalam wilayah yang berbeda. Seorang kandidat tidak bisa memenangkan suara mayoritas hanya dengan kemenangan di wilayah Selatan atau Timur Laut saja. Fakta membuktikan bahwa pada saat sekarang hampir setiap kandidat presiden yang sukses, memenangkan suara di mayoritas negara bagian.

Pada saat *Electoral College* mengalami suara imbang, berdasarkan Amandemen ke 12 Konstitusi, DPR akan memilih Presiden. Tiap delegasi dari negara bagian mempunyai hak satu suara untuk memilih di antara ketiga kandidat yang memenangkan suara paling banyak di tingkat *electoral votes*.

Banyak warga Amerika ingin mengganti sistem pemilu presiden menjadi sistem pemilihan langsung, tapi kemungkinan seperti itu tidak akan terjadi dalam waktu dekat. Melakukan amandemen terhadap Konstitusi membutuhkan kemauan politik yang sangat kuat; hanya 27 amandemen yang berhasil disahkan dalam rentang waktu lebih dari 220 tahun. Perubahan sistem pemilu presiden akan menghadapi penolakan dari beberapa negara-negara bagian kecil (yang mempunyai proporsi kecil pada *Electoral College*), pendukung sistem dua partai dan pendukung dari sistem pemerintahan federal .

Seperi apapun, *Electoral College* setidaknya menawarkan kepastian. Selama ini, DPR hanya memilih presiden sebanyak dua kali pemilihan karena tidak ada kandidat yang memenangkan suara mayoritas. Hal itu terakhir terjadi pada 1824.

Sumber: diterjemahkan dari IIP Digital Pamphlet, June 2012. File dalam bahasa Inggris bisa diakses di: <http://tinyurl.com/8q7dfvy>

U.S. ELECTIONS 2012

1. Bennet, James. **THE PRICE OF AMERICAN POLITICS** (The Atlantic, October 2012)

Not since the Gilded Age has our politics been opened so wide to corporate contributions and donations from secret sources. And the new era of big money has just begun. Jim Bopp, its intellectual architect, believes this is a good thing—the more money, the better, he says. Reformers (and most voters) disagree. Their battle is over the most-basic ideas of our democracy; at stake—according to both sides—is either the revitalization of politics, or its final capture by the powerful. Full text is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/8pcilc2>

2. Blumenthal, Sidney. **ABRAHAM LINCOLN: THE GREAT CAMPIAGNER** (Newsweek, October 15, 2012).

The latest Lincoln boom—kicking off with the bicentennial of his birth in 2009 and the continuing sesquicentennial of the Civil War—shows no sign of abating. It may not even reach its apogee with the release immediately post-election of Steven Spielberg's Lincoln, a biopic starring Daniel Day-Lewis in the title role. Spielberg, according to a source familiar with the production, has deliberately withheld the film until the current, divisive presidential campaign is over in order to prevent Lincoln from being seized upon to score political points. Full text is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/d3tas7r>



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GLOBAL ISSUES

3. Anderson, C.W. **WHAT'S THE BEST MODEL FOR A DIGITAL NEWS BUSINESS?** (Columbia Journalism Review, Sept./Oct. 2012).

Too often, conversations about the evolution of media seem to pit defensive, old-school journalists against arrogant, tech-savvy upstarts. But in late 2009, the factions combined forces in three well-funded, digital-first news organizations: The Chicago News Cooperative, the Bay Citizen (of San Francisco), and the Texas Tribune merged the possibilities opened up by new digital technology with the experience and reporting chops of professional reporters. All three also formed partnerships with The New York Times, feeding regional coverage to its zoned editions in those cities. Available thru eLibraryUSA Database.

4. Ridlet, Matt **APOCALYPSE NOT: HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT END TIMES** (Wired, August 2012)

When the sun rises on December 22, as it surely will, do not expect apologies or even a rethink. No matter how often apocalyptic predictions fail to come true, another one soon arrives. And the prophets of apocalypse always draw a following—from the 100,000 Millerites who took to the hills in 1843, awaiting the end of the world, to the thousands who believed in Harold Camping, the Christian radio broadcaster who forecast the final rapture in both 1994 and 2011. Full text is available at <http://tinyurl.com/9o9rhzy>

5. ENTREPRENEURS: THE NEXT GENERATION (IIP Digital eJournal USA, October 2012).



Many young people around the world share the belief that becoming an entrepreneur is the most effective and exciting way to make their dreams and ideas a reality. As the founder of an organization of young entrepreneurs writes in this issue, it gives them freedom to transform their own lives and their communities and change the world for the better. This publication highlights a world of opportunities (and challenges) that waits to be explored by the next generation of entrepreneurs. Full text is available <http://tinyurl.com/8d84nq3>

U.S. EDUCATION, SOCIETY & VALUES

6. Hirtle, Peter B. **WHEN IS 1923 GOING TO ARRIVE AND OTHER COMPLICATIONS OF THE U.S. PUBLIC DOMAIN** (Searcher, September 2012)

The best thing about copyright is that it expires. The Constitution gives Congress the power to grant the monopoly we call copyright if it wishes, but stipulates that it can only be for "limited times." Once copyright in a work expires (or if it never had it in the first place), the work returns to its natural state as part of the public domain. When works rise into the public domain, anyone is free to use, reuse, remix, and build upon them. Disney can make movies based on Snow White or Cinderella; John Gardner can rethink the Beowulf story in Grendel; and orchestras are free to play symphonies by Beethoven. None have to worry that a copyright owner may seek to limit or control what they can do with works in the public domain. The best thing about copyright is that it expires. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/9urjrp3>

7. Cohen, Rich **THEY TAUGHT AMERICA HOW TO WATCH FOOTBALL** (The Atlantic, October 2012)

The coach as general. The players as gladiators. Ed Sabol and his son, Steve, have spent the past half century at NFL Films, inventing the tropes of modern football. Color, slow motion, ubiquitous cameras and microphones, the omniscient narrator invoking the language of war—the Sabols pioneered all of this and, in so doing, helped make football the national game. Full text is available at <http://tinyurl.com/c6xcfmy>

8. Tyre, Peg. **THE WRITING REVOLUTION** (The Atlantic, October 2012)

For years, nothing seemed capable of turning around New Dorp High School's dismal performance—not firing bad teachers, not flashy education technology, not after-school programs. So,

faced with closure, the school's principal went all-in on a very specific curriculum reform, placing an overwhelming focus on teaching the basics of analytic writing, every day, in virtually every class. What followed was an extraordinary blossoming of student potential, across nearly every subject—one that has made New Dorp a model for educational reform. Read more <http://tinyurl.com/9j2le22>

9. Solomon, Brian **SHAHID KHAN: THE NEW FACE OF THE NFL AND THE AMERICAN DREAM** (Forbes, September 24, 2012)

With sweat and smarts, Pakistan-born Shahid Khan built a \$3.4 billion manufacturing juggernaut from the ruins of an Illinois auto parts maker. To celebrate, he just bought one of the worst teams in the NFL, with the pledge of a similar turnaround. Only in America, folks. Find it online at <http://tinyurl.com/93x39wy>

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